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THE

ISLET'S SPIRIT: A DRAMA,

IN FOUR ACTS AND FIVE SCENES.

BY WALTER F. AUSTIN.

TIME—1711 to 1718.

PLACE—*Scotland, and a Bahama Islet.*

PITTSBURGH:

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1877.

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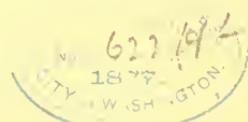
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CHARACTERS.

CAPTAIN JAMES BRAND, of Schooner Centipede.

REV. JONAH HULKS, Brand's Chaplain, an expelled member of Scottish kirk

DR. EDWARD CALVERT, Surgeon of Centipede.

DON RODRIGO, a Cuban receiver.

MR. WILLIAM GIBBS, First Mate Centipede.

HARRY GASKET, Lt. H. M. Ship Caltrop.

HARRINGTON, First Mate Centipede, vice Gibbs, resigned.

SPANISH JACK, Second Mate Centipede.

Pirate.

English Seamen.

AMELIA SEYMOUR, Spirit of the Isle.

MRS. SEYMOUR, Amelia's Mother.

ESTHER DALTON.

BABETTE, Brand's black Servant.

DRESS.

CAPT. BRAND—1st Act, Gentlemen's costume of period; plain. 2d Act, extravagantly and elegantly dressed in costume of the period. 4th Act, sailor costume.

REV. JONAH HULKS.—Clerical habit, drunken appearance.

DR. CALVERT.—Plain dress of time.

DON RODRIGO.—Spanish dress of period, plain; green shade over one eye; expression villainous.

MR. GIBBS.—Disordered, highly colored sailor costume; heavy beard.

HARRY GASKET.—Plain officer's uniform of period.

HARRINGTON.—Sailor's costume.

SPANISH JACK.— “ “

Pirate.— “ “

English seamen.— “ “

AMELIA SEYMOUR—1st Act, plain Scottish costume of period. 3d and 4th Acts, hair down, eccentric dress.

MRS. SEYMOUR.—Plain Scottish dress of period.

ESTHER DALTON.—Plain dress of period.

BABETTE, (colored).—Red Handkerchief around her head; style of dress servant's costume, plain.

THE ISLET'S SPIRIT.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Sitting-room in Mrs. Seymour's house, in Scotland.* MRS. SEYMOUR and AMELIA seated at a table, sewing.

MRS. SEYMOUR.—Daughter, you are love-blind. He is a bad and dangerous man, and even now it is whispered guilty of serious crimes. He hath neglected the duties of the kirk, and made his associates among the vicious and the wicked, and sneers at religion. From boyhood he has been cruel and abusive; and I now say for the last time that with my consent you will never be the wife of James Brand!

AMELIA, (*appealingly*).—Nay, dear mother, consider. If you do not now think it your duty, take time to reflect over a matter of such moment to me. Think how much my happiness depends on it. Nay, by such a declaration do you not place a life-time bar between your only daughter and happiness? for without him, I am by you, mother, kind, affectionate and indulgent in all things else, condemned to a life-time of sorrow.

MRS. S.—Daughter, daughter, can it be possible that you are so infatuated and blind to the failings of a man of such bad reputation?

AMELIA, (*quickly*).—They slander him; he is good, and so lovable. Remember, also, he was Robert's friend.

MRS. S.—And I am sorry for it. It reconciled me to my boy going to America, else I could not have parted with him.

AMELIA.—Mother, you might be mistaken; you certainly are prejudiced. You say his reputation is not good. Point to a single act of his that is really bad.

MRS. S.—A clergyman's son, reared with all the benefits of the Christian example of his good father and pious mother, he neglects the services. He spends his time not in frugal pursuits but in extravagance. Well educated, he shuns the learned. He has impoverished his father and broken a loving mother's heart; and think, imagine a heart so vicious and cruel as to starve, out of sheer wantonness, his faithful dog!

AMELIA.—He has explained that. The dog was sick, and fasting was necessary to cure. He wept when he told me of it. His

extravagance comes from his generosity of soul, and time will cure it. And then, dearest mother, consider his intellect, his handsome bearing and amiable ways. I love him; I can never do else than love him! (Weeps).

Mrs. S.—Poor, foolish girl! You say he is coming this evening; let it be his last visit to this roof.

Mrs. Seymour retires, leaving Amelia weeping.

AMELIA, (*sol.*)—Yes, we must part till his reputation is vindicated from these slanders that have poisoned mother's mind, (*Pulls half sixpence on string from her breast and kisses it*), but I'll be true to him even though we are never to meet again.

[*Knock at door, which quickly opens. Enter BRAND, looking cautiously around, in hurried manner.*]

BRAND.—Dearest Amelia, (*sees half sixpence and kisses it; then kisses Amelia*), I have but a moment to stay; I am the victim of my own rash generosity, and I have come to say good-bye. Pay heed; I am suspected of a robbery on the highway last night, and to save a friend, the perpetrator of the deed; to save his life and reputation, I risk my own life and sacrifice my good name; I must fly the country!

AMELIA.—Oh, James, do not kill me! Stay and vindicate yourself for my sake. Noble and generous as such a sacrifice is, a robber and thief is unworthy of it.

BRAND.—I must; I have promised, and would die rather than break my word. He is worthy. His children cried for the bread he could not give. His wife was wasting away for the mere necessities of life, and in desperation he committed the crime. Now, remember, dearest girl, (*embraces her*), I am innocent—in Heaven's name, I am innocent—by our love, holier in its purity than angel's loves, I am innocent! Do you believe? Remember the circumstances point to me.

AMELIA.—Believe you, James; I know you are innocent, and nothing could change my belief in it.

BRAND.—The separation will only be temporary, and you shall hear from me. But I must hasten. (*Pulls out half sixpence*). Kiss it; kiss me, and it lies next my heart till you become my wife.

AM.—Oh, Father in Heaven, help me to part with him and protect him! I cannot! no, I cannot! (*Faints in his arms*).

BR.—Well, this is a disagreeable circumstance! Just as I had her worked up to the point to negotiate a loan for my necessities! Amelia, dear Amelia! (*Scats her on chair*). If I aid the girl, I will be detained and in danger. Amelia! dearest, waken! Brand, my boy, your usual luck! time is pressing. Her capacity for belief in the improbable is wonderful.

Exit hurriedly.

[*A period of seven years is supposed to elapse between 1st and 2d Act.*]

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The sitting room in Captain Brand's House, on a Bahama Islet. Room, with furniture and fixtures of various designs; table with decanters and bottles. CAPTAIN BRAND, elegantly attired, and REV. HULKS seated at the table. DR. CALVERT standing.*

DR., (*log*).—Well, this is certainly a most mysterious disappearance. Every nook and cavern searched, and not a trace of her. Escape from the Isle is impossible, and whither could she go? The windows and doors barred and guarded, and yet escaped! But to what and to where? No, no; another victim of this human devil's work. Death in the wave before dishonor. And this spirit or ghost of Brand's dead wife, so frequently seen by the men, who was seen with her in the room! Ridiculous as the superstition seems, I half believe it myself. Gibbs, courageous to desperation usually, saw the spirit, and in his mad effort to escape, falls at the expense of a broken leg and rib, it—

BR.—Come, come, my dear Doctor! how can you be homesick in such company? Come, be sociable; I would wager that you are thinking of some absent fair one; come, a glass of wine.

HULKS.—Yes, Doctor, profit by my example; a little for the stomach's sake. As your spiritual adviser, I'll absolve you if you take a drop too much. Wine (*filling his glass and drinking*) is plainly permitted by the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example, as I have oft-times contended in the Presbytery. (*Dr. seats himself.*)

BR., (*filling Dr's. glass*).—You may rely on my Rev. father's instructions, Dr. He is thoroughly orthodox, else he never would have been my ghostly adviser. I was reared with all the advantages of a Christian education, and I examined my Rev. father closely on the Confession of Faith and Catechism, and I assure you, my dear Doctor, that you may rely on any instruction he may give you. (*Laughs*).

DR., (*sarcastically*).—No doubt my spiritual interests would be safe in his hands. (*Drinks*). I understand you to say, Captain, that no clue has been found to your fair prisoner.

BR.—Dr., Dr., my prisoner! my enslaver, you mean. Corrections are always in order. No; nothing. The guard at the window saw the Spirit or Ghost of the Islet, flew to Gibbs whose vision aided by an extra glass of rum saw it also, and fled, providentially breaking a leg and rib, (I could have survived it if it had been his neck), and nothing has been seen of either the ghost or the fair Esther since. I am afraid—it makes me sad to think of it—that mourning over her sins turned her head, and that she became a suicide. What said she, dear father, when you saw her last—with reference to me, for instance.

HULKS.—My son, it was not complimentary to you. I proposed marriage for you; depicted your miserable condition (*smiles*) without her love, and she very determinedly rejected, and with foolish intemperance (*drinks*) of speech peculiar to her sex, desired me, ¹ terrible thought! to kill her, and if I was a Christian, to send word of her death to Harry.

BR.—Father, please don't make me jealous. Harry! what Harry?

HULKS.—Harry Gasket, an officer in the English navy, I think she said. Her escape or lunacy I'll venture to assert arose probably from an imagined sight of the Islet Spirit. I wish we could rid our people of that delusion; it interferes very materially with the religious instruction of the crew—foolish superstition!

BR., (*smiling*).—Yes, foolish superstition. To think that my lamented Amelia, after lacerating my feelings and wrecking my nervous system by plunging under my very eye, over the cliff into the sea, would, with that contradictory woman spirit, return in this way to torment us. So unfortunate that it happened, as I sincerely loved Amelia, my old Scottish sweet-heart, the sister of my bosom friend, Robert Seymour. Dr., I suppose you have heard of the unfortunate affair?

DR.—Not fully; merely that you *married* the lady after the capture of the ship on which she and her mother were passengers, and that in a few days after the ceremony she became insane, and that after landing here she escaped from Babette, and in your sight sprang over the cliff and was drowned. (*sadly*), Only that.

BR., (*maliciously*).—Nearly correct, Dr. You omitted to mention the unimportant fact that the night of the wedding my esteemed mother-in-law was drowned. But, ah! those five delicious days! Dear father, had I no other cause to bless the day we met, that night, entrancing, rapturous night! when by the holy ceremony of marriage you gave Amelia to my arms, were ample to make you remembered in my prayers for an eternity. Oh, recollection of delightful wanton hours do not overcome me! Those few blissful days, when, in the innocence of our love, we lived only for each other! On the evening of the fifth day—unhappy hour!—I went on deck with my bride lovingly clinging to my arm, with her head touching my shoulder, to gaze, Dr., upon the most beautiful sunset I ever witnessed; and whilst drinking in its beauties she looked aloft, and catching sight of the skull and crossbones in their setting of jet, fainted, and awoke a maniac. So sad! so sad!

HULKS.—Very; I never felt so depressed in my life. Just as matters were progressing so splendidly! Women are such eccentric creatures.

DR., (*dryly*).—Very eccentric. Peculiar whim, to allow so slight a circumstance to unsettle the reason.

BR., (*drinking*).—It was my first marriage, too, by a regularly ordained clergyman. Prior to my father's engagement, my late first mate was usually improvised for matrimonial exigencies, but so blunderingly did he perform the sacred functions on one occasion that the recollection of it drove him to suicide. He carefully tied himself up in a sack and sprang overboard.

DR.—You seem to have been as unfortunate with your officers as your *wives*, Captain.

BR.—Very unfortunate—very. Almost constantly a widower, and continually changing mates. But it is one of the drawbacks of the profession, and I suppose I'll have to put up with it. Look at Gibbs, for instance—made my confidant—showered favors upon him—promoted him from before the mast to be first mate—runs from a shadow. By the way, Doctor, how is Mr. Gibbs doing? Mending, I hope; and father, what report have you to make of his spiritual condition?

DR.—Captain Brand, wounded men chained in underground dungeons, fed on putrid bread, do not usually *mend*. Gibbs is not *mending*, and unless you allow me for humanity's sake to furnish him other quarters and treatment he will soon be the undertaker's and not the surgeon's subject.

BR.—Fie, fie, Doctor! such a ghastly joke; it grates upon my nerves.

HULKS.—Yes, the undertaker's profits begin where the doctor's terminate. (*Laughs*).

BR.—But, seriously, Doctor; I must enforce discipline, much as I dislike it. You would very much oblige me in future by not making such requests. Their discussion might lead to an estrangement between us, (to be deplored), and be followed by disagreeable consequences.

DR., (*aside*).—Disagreeable consequences—the fiend; the bullet or the rope. (*Aloud*). Captain Brand, I hope you will excuse my again mentioning the matter of my discharge. I agreed, without knowing the service, to serve you one year. That period elapsed more than a month ago, and I again ask you to consider me released.

BR.—My dear Doctor, why do you press this matter? How can I part with you, now we are adapted to each other's ways? Beside, think of my poor sick men. How can you leave them? Doctor, I sometimes have thought (pray, pardon me, if I wrong you), that you entertain a dislike to me. If I have ever offended you, pray forgive me; now, won't you?

DR.—I only speak of the matter in its business light, Captain. I engaged for a certain period; I decline extending it.

BR.—Well, Doctor, I propose for another year. Think over it to-night, and in the morning we will take a walk to see the sun rise,

at the cliff, and then if determined to leave good company, I will have to release you. (*Turning to Hulks*). And now, dear father, what have you to report from your erring member Gibbs? Is he still unrepentant, and does he still stubbornly refuse to partake of holy things?

HULKS.—Still unrepentant, my son, and obdurate. He's the most disagreeable sinner I ever had the honor to handle. Instead of Heaven's peace and the narrow path, he desires only life enough to tear out your eyes, and to have his fingers on your throat; and, worse—far worse—he reviled my holy office and wished that I might roast in—

BR., (*holding up his hands*).—Don't repeat his blasphemy. Obdurate wretch! I must reason with him on his conduct. Reviled you, my faither! Horrible!

DR., (*rising*).—Gentlemen, I have my visits to make; pray excuse me. I will see you as arranged in the morning.

Retires.

Enter BABETTE, courtesying.

BR.—What now, good Babette? Have you seen the ghost again, you superstitious old hag?

BABETTE.—Don Rodrigo has come, and must see you particular.

BR.—Show him up, Babette; show him in.

Exit Babette.

BR.—Rodrigo, eh! what's the old villian after now? He would realize well as a ghost, eh! father.

Enter RODRIGO. BRAND and HULKS greet him heartily.

BR.—My dear Rodrigo, we're delighted to see you. How's Senora? and what favoring breeze of heaven wafts you here? Only a friendly call, I know, as I have not sailed since your last visit.

ROD.—Only a friendly call, Captain, as you shall find.

BR.—Mayhap your tender conscience pricks you for the hard bargain you drove with me.

ROD.—Nay, Captain; 'tis you that drives hard bargains. I've impoverished myself buying your plun—merchandise at extravagant prices, to say nought of the risk..

HULKS.—Here, my son, don't be so inhospitable; pass the wine.

BR.—Right, father; here Don, try some of my own importation. (*Hulks and Brand laugh*).

They seat themselves. RODRIGO drinks.

ROD.—Captain Brand, I bear bad news. England has signed an alliance with France and Holland against Spain. They are afraid of good Cardinal Alberoni, (whom may the Virgin and Saints protect!) and an English fleet is even now in these waters.

BR., (*brow clouding*).—That is truly bad news.

ROD.—On receipt of this information I immediately sailed from Havana to warn you.

BRAND *silent and thoughtful.*

HULKS.—Now, this is too infer—bad. Just as I get safely settled ashore and my labors prospering, (*drunks,*) my own ungrateful, meddlesome country helps hunt me out. (*Rising.*) I disown Britain from this moment.

BR.—Very annoying! I suppose we'll have to bear it philosophically. We all have our crosses to bear, Don. I will make immediate preparations to sail.

ROD.—If I can assist you, Captain, command me. Any treasure, for instance, you want safely kept, subject to your order—

BR.—I am deeply grateful, but I won't impose on your good nature, Don. No, I have but little in the way of gold or silver. These disagreeable tidings quite unhinge me. Father, escort Don Rodrigo to your study, and try and proselyte him to the faith while I attend to business consequent on the Don's information. We will meet in half an hour. In discussing religious questions, gentlemen, be cool, for unless you are, experience has taught me, oral argument as a means is useless to arrive at truth. The debater is nearly always a mere partisan, seldom unprejudicedly judicial.

DON.—Never fear, Captain Brand, Mr. Hulks will yet be an ornament in the desk of our holy faith.

They retire.

BRAND *goes to door and calls,* "Babette! Babette!"

Enter BABETTE.

BR.—Babette, have Harrington come here immediately.

BABETTE.—Aye, aye, sir! (*Going.*)

BR.—Hold—Tell him to bring Spanish Jack, and leave him in the kitchen.

Exit BABETTE.

BR., (*log*)—So, so! The English here, and I must leave. Curious—half my lifetime has been spent in running away from somebody. Well, I'll sail for my other snug harbor in Mexican Gulf; and my treasure—that upon which I expect to retire when my sailing days are over—not for that villainous Rodrigo. Oh, ho! he's very kind—I'll bury it safe enough before I sleep. Damn them all; I'll show them Centipede's heels yet; and when they cast anchor here, 'twill be in a barren port; every stick goes up as high as powder will blow it, and fire will do the rest. Oh, ho! my countrymen! I won't make your acquaintance again, having cut it. Now, about Rodrigo; the thief can't be of farther use to me, but his sloop would for the inlets in the gulf. My disinterested Spanish friend, I'll give you immediate attention. Then,

there's the Doctor, I can't stand his persistence any longer. He can ruminant over the pleasures of an eternal engagement, to the disparagement of my service, if he can. He's too tender a plant for this world. And Mr. Gibbs will only be in the way; I'll have to take time to dispose of him, precious as the moments are.

Enter BABETTE.

BABETTE.—Harrington, here, sir.

BR.—Show him in, Babette.

Enter HARRINGTON, bowing.

BR.—Harrington, my boy; I received information which makes our sailing immediately necessary; but, excuse me—a glass of wine.

HARRINGTON, (*filling a glass*).—Health to you, Captain Brand, and I'm sorry for the news. (*Drinks*).

BR.—Be seated. We will sail in the morning, as the English are in the Bahamas. By the way, as Gibbs is unfitted for service I'll induce him to resign, and you are first mate of the schooner.

HAR.—Thank you, sir; I will try to deserve your confidence.

BR.—Make preparation to have everything on board to-night, if you can, and what's left, burn. Where's Rodrigo's sloop anchored?

HAR.—Within pistol shot of the Centipede.

BR.—I've purchased her, but as her crew might be dissatisfied, board her immediately. Her crew we have no use for. Do you understand?

HAR.—I understand.

BR.—Load the schooner heavy, take all ordnance and provisions. You had better get rid of part of the ballast. Now, my boy, be lively. Send some men here at ten o'clock to get my traps; Babette will have them ready. And I want Spanish Jack and another good man for work in the morning. I can explain to Jack about it, if you have him here.

HAR.—He is in the kitchen.

BR.—Send him up.

HAR.—Aye, aye, sir. (*Bowing*).

Exit.

BR., (*log*).—Curse the luck! to have to blow up my house; then this girl getting off. Why am I such a fool as to make marriage a condition of enjoyment? It is a weakness I must conquer. Fortunately I have a hole the devil himself wouldn't find, for my coin; some consolation in all this trouble.

Enter SPANISH JACK, bowing.

JACK.—Servant, Captain Brand, servant.

BR.—Ho, ho! my hearty. (*Hands wine*).

JACK, (*makes obeisance*).—Your good health, Captain Brand.

BR.—Jack, my hearty; I need a second mate, as Harrington has just been promoted, and you are the man to trust.

JACK.—Thanks, Captain, thanks ; I'll serve you well. You are too good.

BR.—Yes, my boy ; that's it. Just think, after all my kindness, of Rodrigo and the Doctor entering into a conspiracy to murder me !

JACK.—The bloody rascals !

BR.—Yes, Jack ; sad to contemplate the depravity of some natures, but we must thwart them, Jack, and (*goes towards foot-lights*), here is how we'll do it. Rodrigo will be in this room in a few moments. You hide in the closet, and when I direct him to hold up his hands, you rush out, bind his hands well down to his sides, (you'll find rope in the cupboard); gag him, and when I give the signal take him out and put him headforemost in the water butt. Be a good joke. (*Laughs*).

JACK.—Elegant. (*Laughs*).

BR.—We'll talk about the Doctor's case afterwards. But here comes the Don. Quick, to the closet !

JACK *enters closet and closes the door.*

HULKS, (*behind wings*).—Oh, Don Rodrigo ! a man of your excellent every day sense to believe such stuff ! On my conscience, I can't see how you do it !

Enter RODRIGO and HULKS, *arm in arm*.

BR.—Still at it, eh ? What speed have you made, good father ?

ROD.—Captain Brand, such a charming person should be united to the holy church ; that's the place for gentlemen of education and talent. I half believe he even now repents.

HULKS, (*horrified*).—Hush, Don Rodrigo, such blasphemy ! awful !

BR. *smiling.*

ROD.—Well, well, Mr. Hulks ; let's drop the subject till next we meet, when worldly business is not so pressing. Well, Captain Brand, you sail early, I presume ?

BR.—Yes ; I am not anxious to meet my English friends. I am afraid they have forgotten me, and the trouble of renewing the acquaintance is more to be considered than any pleasure I might derive from it. But, my dear Don, how can I repay your kindness in the prompt notification of my danger ? I can never forget it, never. Will you sail in the morning ?

ROD.—To-night, almost immediately, as a Spaniard, I don't want to fall in with anything flying British colors, and must away.

BR.—By the way, my dear Rodrigo, (*taking him by both hands*), I have thought over that matter of the small amount of coin and plate I have by frugality acquired, at the expense of so many hours hard labor. I will give it in your care, and should fortune prove adverse to me in the future and we not meet again, the half

of it is yours ; the other half send to my good Scotch mother whose address I will give you. Will you accept this trust ?

ROD., (*quickly*).—Thanks for this confidence, noble Captain ; it shall never be betrayed ; and if it should be the fate of war that you fall, (heaven prevent it !) I will observe the directions to the letter. My half, however, shall be devoted to charity.

HULKS.—Not, Rodrigo, mind, to propagate the pernicious errors of the Romish church.

ROD.—Just as good Captain Brand directs. His treasure, my own little property and my poor person are always at his disposal.

BR., (*cooly and smiling*).—That being the case, my dear Don, oblige me by throwing up your hands. (*Covering Don with his pistol*).

JACK *springs from the closet, and begins pinioning RODRIGO. BRAND'S pistol still covering him.*

ROD., (*quaking*).—For heaven's love, Captain Brand, what does this mean ? oh, what does it mean ? Not treachery from you whom I have so faithfully served ?

BR.—Only a little surprise, Don. Don't be alarmed, if your conscience is easy.

ROD., (*piteously*).—Oh, do not harm me ! You cannot, good Captain Brand ; an old man. It can do you no good. Come, have me released. (*By this time firmly bound—Jack with gag in hand*).

BR.—Rodrigo, if the evidence had not been so overwhelming, I could not have believed ; conspiring with that rascal, the Doctor, to murder me, eh ? with your cock-and-bull story about the English fleet. To-morrow you prove your innocence, or to-morrow night you—well, you won't dream.

ROD.—I'll prove it. Give me the chance ; say no harm shall come to me to-night, and I can prove it ; I, I, your friend.

BR.—Well, I hope so ; I must confine you till to-morrow morning, and will confront you with your accuser. But I must say, oh, depraved human nature ! that the proof of your guilt is plain as heaven's sun.

ROD.—By my holy church——

HULKS.—Here, Don, now please don't rub against my religious convictions in that way.

BR., (*to Jack, who is applying gag*).—Confine our friend as directed, Jack. Treat him well ; furnish him every comfort. We must be hospitable, my boy.

Exit JACK and RODRIGO.

BR., (*goes to window and looks out, laughs*).—Father, come here, quick ! (*Hulks runs to window ; both laugh, Brand immoderately.*) Now, is not that the most ludicrous sight ? What a spectacle ! His old head under water and his heels kicking like a French frog in the air. (*Roars with laughter*). I almost forgot my troubles.

HULKS.—You have a keen sense of the ludicrous, my son. To me the thought of his dying a Papist detracts from the pleasure of the affair. I must retire and offer a special prayer while he yet is alive. (*Makes motion hurriedly to go*).

BR.—Hold, father; this is a special case. You can pray more at leisure, as I have pressing need of your assistance in another matter.

HULKS.—Sad, my son, to have to defer that duty. Let us hope he even now repents. What do you desire of me, my son?

BR.—Why, we must reason with Mr. Gibbs. Do you and Babette hoist him through the hatch, first binding him firmly to a chair and blindfolding him. When you do that, set the trigger on the trap, and then come up, father, yourself, and between us see if we cannot soften him. (*Laughs*).

₁ HULKS, (*smiling*).—Ah, my son, another special case.

Exit.

BRAND whistles a tune—arranges the spring on floor—tries it with his foot—then springs the trap—arranges rope (green silk) to fall over trap—tries the noose—lays a pistol on table—arranges bottles and glasses.

BR.—There, now; Gibbs' appetite will be tickled with the display. That trap is my own invention; I'll patent it some day, and then execute infringers on it.

Gibbs, &c., heard under trap.

BR., (*looking down*).—Be very careful of Mr. Gibbs, father; (*Gibbs groans*); easy, gently, now.

GIBBS.—Oh! O——! damn his liver! oh! a——h! Capen Brand, if I only had my fingers on your bloody throat!

BR.—My dear Gibbs, how can you? how can you? Gibbs, you reprobate, will nothing soften you?

GIBBS, (*groaning*).—Sofen hell and——

BR.—Now, Mr. Gibbs, you must cease that horrible profanity.

Enter GIBBS, bound to chair, manacled, and groaning.

BR.—Now, Mr. Gibbs, how do you feel? Comfortable, I hope.

GIBBS.—Comforable, damn ye! comforable! Look ye here, Capen Brand, is this the way you treat an old friend? Look at me—I'm burning up!

Enter HULKS.

HULKS.—Gibbs, you will burn up if you are not more careful when you die. If you don't repent, you'll be tormented by the worm that never dies; and then to think of it, reviling the Lord's saints on earth!

GIBBS.—You blasted old canter! you a saint? Hell's full——

BR., (*stepping up and punching him in the sorrib*).—For shame!

GIBBS, (*howls*).—Don't kill me! Oh, damn ye, that's my broken rib!

BR.—There you go again, you obdurate wretch ! Now keep quiet, and stop swearing. You do it to wound me, you malicious dog. My Gibbs—

GIBBS.—For God's sake, Capen, give me a little rum ! I'm pain all over.

HULKS.—The toper's old, old story ; after all you've endured, too, from the terrible habit of rum drinking.

BR.—Yes, and look at his filthy condition ; his clothing disarranged. How I dislike a slovenly man. Why don't you tie your neckkerchief ?

GIBBS.—How the dev——kin I, manacled like a dog ? and what do I care ?

BR.—Wait, I'll do it for you, (*ties Gibbs' handkerchief; in so doing slips noose over his head—rope resting outside his handkerchief and falling over chair back*), now, that's better ; you begin to look quite handsome ; does he not, father ?

HULKS.—A perfect Adonis !

BR.—Now, Mr. Gibbs, I want to talk to you for your own good. If we can come to a pleasant understanding, I will release you and furnish more comfortable quarters, if you'll only promise to behave yourself like a Christian ; but I am first going to give you a short lecture, then if you promise favorably—

HULKS.—And repent—

BR.—And repent, we'll have a social glass and be friends. But first, Mr. Gibbs, as I want your undivided attention, you will please look right into my eye, and at no other object. Failure to regard this request will be followed by disagreeable consequences. (*Cocks pistol at Gibbs' ear—Gibbs starts*). No danger if you pay attention. Now. (*Motions to Hulks and seats himself—foot on trigger—pistol in hand—Hulks removes bandage*). Now, Mr. Gibbs—

GIBBS, (*gazing longingly at bottles*).—Oh, Capen Brand, just one swig of rum !

HULKS—Gracious heavens ! to what degradation the thirst for liquor plunges a man !

BR.—Now, Gibbs, if you open your mouth again till I give you permission, you do so on your own responsibility. (*Tapping pistol*). Gibbs, this last act of disobedience, your cowardice in running away from a figment of your imagination, is too much to bear and make any pretence at discipline. I have always favored you—love you even yet.

HULKS.—As a brother.

BR.—Aye, as my own brother, and how am I repaid ? Repeated acts of disobedience, running over two years. Look at you, in face of my orders to send all prisoners to heaven, coming ashore with a monkey of a boy, as though I desired to start an orphan asylum.

HULKS.—Well knowing our philanthropy does not take that direction.

BR.—Now, what do you say?

GIBBS.—I say, if you shoot me here, I saw Miss Amelia in the new lady's room the night I broke my bones. They stood together, and she throwed up her arms and runned at me.

BR.—And you run, you dog! Nonsense—I saw her go over the cliff nearly two years ago, and sink. Now, don't talk that stuff to me. Now, Gibbs, you savage, will you try and do better, if I forgive you? Come, let's be friends again.

GIBBS.—Gimme a chance, Capen Brand, and I'd die for ye yet!

HULKS.—Now, that's the proper spirit.

BR.—Excuse me for overlooking it. Will you drink a glass of rum with us? Father, fill Mr. Gibbs a glass. (*Hulks does so, and as he hands it to Gibbs, Brand rises foot on trigger*). My Gibbs, here's a toast, "Forgiveness for the past, forgetfulness for the future."

GIBBS.—Drink hearty. (*Raising glass to his lips, when Brand pressing his foot on trigger, trap falls; glass drops from Gibbs' hands. Hulks drinks his rum*).

HULKS, (*hurriedly*).—I must retire and pray for his sinful soul.

Exit.

Captain Brand looking through hatchway, with hand on rope.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—Cavern. Various stores piled about; a rude bed, stools, &c. ESTHER DALTON, pale and careworn. Common lamp lit.

ESTHER.—Oh, I wish she would return! Her trouble and hatred of Brand has rendered her desperate, and I am continually afraid some ill will overtake her. What a life she must have led; buried here in this cave, and, ah! I must be her companion till death! No hope, no prospect of escape. This loneliness will drive me mad. Oh! Harry, if you could but know my fate! I wonder if he has yet given up hope as I have, and that the ship with his bride will ever arrive. Hark! what's that? (*Listens*). Only the waves beating against the cliff. And Amelia, her fate, and wonderful escape! washed by the incoming tide into the crevice and left half drowned on the sand in the cavern leading to this one, and living buried here for months. Hark!

Enter AMELIA.

ESTH.—Oh! Amelia, dear, I was afraid something had happened you.

AM.—And so something has happened at which you will rejoice, and which, while I join in that rejoicing, is painful to me, as it will delay my vengeance on Brand.

ESTH.—What has happened, Amelia? Tell me quickly. Any hope of escape?

AM.—Yes. I have been using my ears to a good advantage. The English fleet are in the Bahamas, and the pirate sails to-morrow, to escape them.

ESTH.—Oh, joy! joy!

AM.—Brand will blow up the house in the morning, and has made arrangements to murder Calvert by leaving him strapped to a trestle on the cliff to die, before he sails; and we must save him.

ESTH.—How? Oh, wretch!

AM.—By hiding behind the wall on the shore till they leave him, and then cut the cords that bind him. We will have to leave here to-night, and steal through the cellar. Now, be brave, dear girl.

ESTH.—I will. The prospect, or even possibility of ultimate escape, would nerve me to do anything. Oh! Amelia, are you not delighted?

AM.—Only as to your prospects. The purpose for which I have lived seems more distant than before. If your own and the Doctor's safety were assured, James Brand would be cut to pieces in less than an hour!

ESTH.—Dismiss these thoughts, dear girl, and leave him to the vengeance of a Just God.

AM.—Not even the hope of eternal salvation would stay my hand against my mother's murderer. I don't ask you to share this feeling—more of the tiger's than woman's—but he has made me so. Look, Esther, at my awful fate! his trusting bride—duped to believe his story that he was in the Spanish service, and that we would rejoin mother and Robert in America in a few weeks—the kind insanity that blotted out reason and spared me torture when I saw his flag, and a knowledge of my mother's murder came over me.—My escape from death by being thrown through the crevice under the wave into the cavern leading to this.—My life for two years past a hell on earth, feeding like a rat from the stores in his cellar. Think of it! No, you can never know how I loved and trusted him, even when a fugitive from justice; and you can never know how I hate him.

ESTH.—Amelia, dearest, you make me shudder. Your wrongs can be righted by Heaven; cease to brood over them.

AM.—Never! It would be sweet; nay, I can imagine no joy of heaven or earth half so sweet as to watch the light fade from his eye in slow and agonizing death. How I could then tell him of his infamy and cruelty, and make a every word a stab to his false, bad heart!

ESTH.—Oh, Amelia, Amelia! talk about something else. Tell me how you heard this good news, and if any of the Centipede's crew saw the ghost.

AM—I will not tell you all I heard, and his crimes to-night; it would only horrify you. I could hardly restrain myself. He will never know how near death he was to-night, till I tell him. He would have wished that he had explored the subterranean creek that runs through his cellar—the only entrance to this cave—and when he is in my power, as he will yet be, how delightful to tell him after all his searching for you; how, as he expressed it, not a hole big enough to hide a rat not searched; to tell him that the little creek was large enough to admit to his cellar an enemy worse to be dreaded than the English; and the spirit he dismissed so contemptuously could have slain him almost any day. But enough of this; we must make haste to get through the cellar while they sleep, and be at our post to save the Doctor's life.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE 1st.—*Near the cliff—settle—tropical trees—view of ocean in the background.*

Enter CAPTAIN BRAND and DR. CALVERT.

BR.—How can I entertain your proposition for discharge at this time? (*They seat themselves on the settle.*) See how I am circumstanced, I have to sail in an hour after destroying my buildings and stores, to escape the English. Now, do be reasonable. I could only promise, and do promise to put you ashore the first opportunity that offers; what else can I do?

DR.—Captain Brand, leave me here with some few provisions. I'll run the risk of being taken off by some vessel which will probably touch here, at all events it is at my risk.

BR.—Why, Doctor, that would be unkind in me, in fact, I couldn't sleep for thinking about you here alone, and maybe never to be taken off. Let me beg of you, also, for my poor crew's sake, to reconsider your determination. Remain with me until I can engage another surgeon. Now, dear Doctor, will you not?

DR.—Captain Brand, why talk to me in that manner?—You know—as unfortunately do I—that I am completely in your power. I have only your honor—that pledge which ought to be sacred with sailors. You know, sir, I have never concealed the sentiment, how I despise and hate this service—how I loathe myself for being in it. You know that I have been daily compelled to witness and hear that which makes my blood boil for

very shame that I did not at least attempt to resent. I again ask you, will you keep your word? Will you?

BR.—Doctor, you do me a grave injustice in every sentence you have uttered, and I pray that you may be forgiven for it. Have your wish and remain, and much as I regret the necessity of parting with you, I will release you. (*Raises his arm—three men rush out, struggle with Calvert and overpower and bind him; Brand smiling.*)

DR., (*hoarsely, as they proceed to strap him to the settle*).—This, this from a gentleman who pledges a sailor's honor! What a fool I was to expect else! And now I change my request to brave Brand—generous in honor and the lives of helpless men, women and children! Brave Brand! Give me but a man's chance for life—put arms in my hands, you blood-hound! and if I can plunge a sword through your black heart I'll submit to any torture! What say you, devil?

BR., (*cooly*).—Passing over your very harsh language, Doctor, I am obliged to decline your very bloodthirsty proposition. These proceedings are merely precautionary. I was afraid you might want to follow me. You can now await some other vessel, and your position here will enable you to catch sight of any sail.

DR.—Aye, to die of thirst in the broiling sun, a feast for gnat and fly. But may death parch my throat if I ask mercy from a fiend! Only leave me, devil, that your malignant eye may not feast on my death agony.

BR.—Now, Doctor, don't be so unreasonable. You know, considered merely as a matter of taste, that gentlemen dying under such circumstances would be a stupid and uninteresting spectacle. Doctor, if you will insist on dying, shall I send Father Hulks to you for a few moment's spiritual conversation? I'm afraid, Doctor, you are unrepentant; dying men should be forgiving, not cherishing spite.

DR.—Noble Brand! to taunt the helpless victim of his treachery! Fiend! I wish I had the power to curse you; that this dastardly deed might dog you for a long life! I can hope to be forgiven for all else, but never, no, I'll never ask mercy for my cowardice and indecision in shirking my duty to humanity and not killing you a year ago!

BR.—Now, Doctor, you are positively cruel. (*Explosion heard*). Come, men, there goes the house, and we must aboard. Farewell, my charming Doctor! and I hope that we shall meet in the great hereafter. Remember, I'll have Father Hulks offer up a special prayer for you; and remember (*men go*) I forgive you freely.

Exit.

DR.—Gone! to leave me to a horrible, terrible death! Oh! it drives me mad to think of the agony I must endure ere it comes.

Come! death, come! (*Struggles*). No use! no use! Oh! God forgive me, and hasten my release. Lingering, hopeless agony! (*Again tugs at the bands.*) Useless! useless! The bands are as cruel and unyielding as the hands that tied them.

Curtain falls slowly. Enter AMELIA and ESTHER, who proceed to cut the ropes.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2d.—*On islet, near ruins of Brand's house.*

Enter BRAND and HULKS, dilapidated condition—the latter looking especially dejected.

HULKS.—Oh! my dear son, this is truly terrible! But what a providential escape! Truly, the Lord is good to us. To think that we are the only survivors of the wreck! I never prayed so fervently to the Throne as I did in the water, for life. But, my son, I feel athirst. Do you think it likely that a cask of rum or so might have escaped destruction in the cellar?

Br., (*who has been thoughtful*).—Stop your chatter, you old brute.

HULKS; (*rolling his eyes*),—Father, forgive us!

Br.—Isn't it enough to be without ship or shelter, without being aggravated by your cursed cry for rum? Humph! I hope the Englishman didn't ride out the hurricane. It would be some consolation to know he was at the bottom of the sea—damn him! If he did, they'll be here as sure as fate, and we must seek a hole to hide in. (*Puts his hand over his eyes*). It's so cursed foggy I can't make out anything. You can't, I know, unless it's drink. You could make out a case bottle of rum ten miles out.

HULKS.—Don't be harsh with your chastened friend, my son. We must bow to the decree of Providence. I do hope every mother's son of that da—English crew have gone to the bottom. I would feel much better.

Br.—I could have rode the gale if they hadn't drove me on the reef and carried away the rudder. Curse them! (*Grinds his teeth*).

HULKS.—Woe is me! Do, dear son, let us make some provision to keep us from starvation, and then seek shelter in some cavern.

Br.—You won't be satisfied till you are drunk again; so we might as well make a search. There was plenty of everything in the cellar, and it's probable that all was not destroyed. Come.

Exit.

Enter AMELIA, DR. CALVERT and ESTHER.

DOCTOR.—Yes, a boat has just landed, but it is so very foggy

I can't just make it out. It can hardly be the Pirate's boat, as it's not probable Brand would return, unless crippled by the storm.

ESTHER.—After all we have endured, I hope it is not that monster again.

AMELIA, (*looking under her hand*).—No, it is not Brand's boat.—Let us go and meet them.

DR.—Are you sure, Amelia?

AM.—They are strangers; I can tell by their action. Perhaps, though, we had better wait a few minutes; (*pauses*). God be praised, they are English.

DR. (*halloos*).

ESTH.—Oh! Father in Heaven—God of the innocent and the true—I thank Thee! What happiness to be at last free! free! We'll all see our friends again!

AM.—Never me, until James Brand's death is assured. If he escaped shipwreck or capture in that awful storm, he can not escape a wronged woman's vengeance.

ESTH. AND DR.—Here they are!

Enter HARRY GASKET and men.

GASKET.—Friends or foes?

DR., (*advancing*).—Friends of anything in man's shape, except the Pirate. We are the victims of the Pirate. These ladies—

ESTHER *buries her face on AMELIA'S shoulder*.

GASK.—Great Heavens, Esther! (*takes her by the hand*). Darling, how came you here—the Pirate's prisoner, and how long?

ESTHER *attempts to speak, but does not,—sobs.*

AM.—Yes, a prisoner for some weeks, but *only* a prisoner, fortunately through me escaping even a worse fate. If you are the lover she has so often spoken of, present in her waking thoughts and in her innocent dreams, thank your God that she is thus cast in your way, as pure, as good as when you met her last. She has been in fearful peril, and but one of many who escaped.

GASK.—Esther, dearest! can you, will you speak?

ESTH.—Again,—I am too overjoyed to speak.

GASK., (*taking her in his arms*). I will never claim my bride till that fiend's death.

DR.— { He dies at my hand.

AM.— { If alive he must suffer at the hand of his wife.

GASK.—I hardly think it possible that he could have escaped. His vessel went to pieces to the north in the storm. If any of his crew escaped, it would be to this islet, and part of my men are even now searching. We made a very narrow escape with the Caltrop.

AM.—Remember, I want your promise that if Brand is alive

and falls into your hands, that he is mine. He married me to himself and a life of misery. In the holy name of justice, he is mine. By your gratitude for the salvation of your intended wife, mine! Great God! I never thought in my hate to hope he would escape death in any violent form.

GASK.—It's not worth while, Miss, to dispute or claim in the matter, as he has undoubtedly perished. But here come my men and they have two prisoners.

Enter Sailors, with BRAND and HULKS bound.

HULKS, (*to Sailor, with his hand on his shoulder*) Sinner, touch not the Lord's anointed.

SAILOR.—The Devil's anointed—no jabber!

BRAND and HULKS *catch sight of AMELIA and attempt to shrink back.*

BRAND.— { Amelia!

HULKS.— { The ghost, the ghost!

CALVERT.—Lieutenant, this is the noble Captain Brand of the schooner Centipede, and this is the saintly Jonah Hulks.

Br. (*smiles*).—Quite a master of ceremonies, Doctor. From the position you occupied when I saw you last I hardly expected to ever see you officiate in that capacity. You made some general remarks, on that occasion, if I recollect, about helpless men, and swords. You still entertain the opinion, I hope, you then expressed.

DR.—Yes, I do, you bloodhound. Lieutenant Gaskett, I beg, I implore as a favor,—you have heard the taunt. Release and arm that man, will you?

GASK.—Captain Brand, you know what fate is in store for you, and this gentleman shall not risk his life with a desperado, who now in my hands, has none to risk in return.

BR.—Your pleasure, Lieutenant, but might I suggest a trial before condemnation?

HULKS.—Yes, Mr. Officer, I want my constitutional right as an Englishman—a trial by a jury of my peers.

GASK.—As a law-abiding citizen, Mr. Hulks.

HULKS.—That's it, exactly; I am only chaplain, and guiltless of any crime.

DR.—You miserable blasphemer and murderer!

AM.—Officer, do as you please with that drunken, impious vagabond; but Brand is mine. His blood be on my head!

BR.—My dear Amelia, next to the surprise at seeing you in the flesh, I am startled at hearing such sentiments from you. Dear girl, beyond love's stratagem I have never harmed you.

AM.—Hush, devil, do not profane the holy name of love by taking it on your lips. Speak, English officers! by all my wrongs so accumulated as to have changed me from a woman to a tigress!

by my mother's murder, still unavenged, as you hope for happiness, will you add to those wrongs? Say he is mine. Let me bind him, even as he bound this man, (*pointing to Dr. C.*) Let me watch him whilst the merciless sun beats down on his face, a face as cruel and merciless. Speak—is he not mine?

GASK.—My wishes as a man must give way to my duty as an officer. The law will vindicate you.

AM.—Can any law, any punishment the law inflicts vindicate me? This devil in man's guise was my trusted lover—I his dupe. When a fugitive from justice, I believed him innocent. Flying the Spanish flag, he overhauled and boarded a vessel on which myself and mother were passengers, on which were helpless women and prattling children. He duped me then to go with him to his vessel, promising to join my mother and brother in America, and then by medium of this wretch by his side, married me—and, great and just God! on my wedding night murdered the passengers and sunk the ship from which he had taken me. Is it not mockery to talk about laws and justice to him? Let me take the place of the law. Speak,—is he mine?

GASK.—As an officer, I cannot grant the demand.

AM.—Mine! mine! If every man in England's service stood here! (*Rushes at BRAND and stabs him twice. The Dr. and GASKET seize her, and BRAND falls.*).

CURTAIN.

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